

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

The amendments to the claims are supported at page 8 of the specification, beginning at line 4. The amendments are for clarification of the language, responsive to the examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, and are not intended to narrow or change the scope of the amended claims.

The examiner has rejected claims 1-7 and 13-18 under 35 U.S.C. 112 second paragraph, as indefinite.

The examiner is criticizing language in claims 1, 13 and 15. An explanation of the meaning of the claim may help understanding.

In each of the claims, when the enabled spin/stop button is depressed for the first time (for example at claim 1, line 7) at least some of the display segments are caused to spin. Then, "...one or more, but not all, of the plurality of display segments stop spinning.

The phrase "after the enabled spin/stop button is depressed for the first time" in claim 1 is being deleted, and "thereafter" is being added, just for purposes of clarification and to avoid confusion. What lines 7-10 of claim 1 are saying is that the display segments start to spin, and then some of them, but not all, stop spinning without any further intervention by the player. Thus, before the spin/stop button is depressed by the player for the second time, some but not all of the display segments may have stopped spinning on their own, without any further action by the player.

Then, when the enabled spin/stop button is depressed for the second time, this causes more of the remaining display segments to stop spinning, typically all of them.

In other words, claim 1 calls for the use of a single button to (1) cause a plurality of display segments to spin, followed by the stopping of some of them without further action by the player. Then, (2) upon a second push of the spin/stop button, a very different action takes place. With the first push, the spinning of a plurality of buttons was initiated. With the second push, the stopping of one or more spinning buttons, a number different from the original number of buttons that were set to spinning, takes place.

Looking at the next independent claim 13, a similar action is described, beginning at line 9: ". . . depressing the enabled first spin/stop button to cause at least some of the plurality of display segments to spin, wherein one or more, but not all, of the plurality of display segments thereafter stop spinning, while other of the plurality of display segments continue spinning . . ."

Then, the same spin/stop button is enabled for the second time, which causes at least some of the other display segments which are still spinning to stop spinning.

Thus, the spin/stop button of this invention not only controls from a single button the initiation of spinning of a plurality of display segments, but it also controls the stopping of one or more display segments, (which is a number different from the number of display segments set to spinning). Thus, the spin/stop button not only controls differing numbers of display segments at different times, but it also controls both the beginning of spinning, and the end of spinning for at least one display segment.

Similar language is found in independent claim 15.

This is submitted to be clear and definite in the claim language, and very different from anything taught in the cited prior art.

For support of this in the specification, see page 8, beginning at line 4.

The examiner has rejected claims 1-7 and 13-18 as unpatentable over Takemoto et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,004,208, in view of Okada U.S. Patent No. 4,889,399, and Lowden U.S. Patent No. 5,630,586, and Heidel U.S. Patent No. 5,342,047.

Takemoto et al. '208 shows a slot machine that can superimpose on a display screen images from different storage locations.

At column 5, lines 48-58, of Takemoto et al. '208, a start lever 108 is provided for accepting instruction to start rotation of the symbol display. There are also separate game stop switches 109 "...which are provided in one-two-one correspondence with the columns..." and "...are instruction means for accepting game stop instructions."

Thus, it can be seen that Takemoto et al. '208 has a separate start switch 108 and a plurality of game stop switches 109, each one of which corresponds with a column of rotating indicia. There fails to be shown a switch that both controls starting and stopping of rotation. There also is no disclosure of a stop switch which is anything other than for control of a single, rotating reel.

Thus, it can be seen that Takemoto et al. clearly fails *per se* to teach the invention of this application.

Okada U.S. Patent 4,889,339 teaches "...a single stop button which is manipulated by a player every time it is desired to stop a plurality of moving symbol columns one after another". (See the Abstract). Note that the stopping of rotation of the single columns is done "... sequentially in a predetermined order by manipulating the single stop button as many times as the number of symbol columns." (See again the Abstract).

Thus, in this case, the stop button of Okada still acts as a single-column stop button in a manner similar to the stop buttons of Takemoto et al. '208, except that the single stop button acts sequentially on each rotating reel.

Furthermore, the stop buttons of Okada, like the stop buttons of Takemoto et al. '208, have nothing to do with the starting of rotation. In Okada '339, rotation of the reels is initiated by pulling an operating handle. See column 1, lines 12-16.

Turning to Lowden Patent 5,630,586, a combined slot machine and table game apparatus and method of play is disclosed. Multiple players are present, and each of them has a spin button. One by one, an individual spin button is enabled by the dealer so that the player can depress it to spin the reels. There is no stop button, as indicated at column 4, lines 49 and 50, which reads "Depression of the spin button 32f by the player at the seat 27 causes the player reel to briefly spin." (Emphasis added). See also, column 5, lines 35 and 36.

Accordingly, Lowden shows a spin button that individually spins the reels, with a plurality of such buttons being present, and with only one of them being activated at any time. Lowden fails to show a stop button, and thus clearly fails to show the combination of a spin button and a stop button in a single button, as called for in the claims of this application.

Turning to Heidel et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,342,047, there is disclosure that buttons such as buttons 32 can have multiple functions. However, note that Heidel et al. teaches that each of these multiple functions are in separate games. In support of this, see column 3, line 53 et seq.: "Further flexibility can be provided by including a

mechanism to automatically change the labels on the game control buttons 32a-32e to correspond to a selected game....”

Accordingly, it is submitted that even the combination of references raised by the examiner fails to teach the invention of this application. There is no teaching in the combination of a button that specifically starts spinning and also specifically stops the spinning of some of the spinning display segments, while other of the spinning display segments stop by a means which is not in the player's control. This provides a game which, as described in page 8 of the specification, provides a time for betting between the time at which, the first and second display segments 24, 26 automatically stop, and the time that the third and fourth display segments stop at the volition of the player, who presses the spin/stop button for the second time (page 9, lines 4-9).

As stated, the combination of references does not even hint at such a method that utilizes a single spin/stop button in this manner.

Accordingly, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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